

THE LITTLE BEAR'S STORY.

By C. F. HOLDER.

"YES," the little bear cub would say, "that is my picture. I am a native of the State of California. I don't remember distinctly where I was born, but it was up in the Sierras, where the snow lies in great banks, and the giant trees stand like sentinels, and where you might travel for days and weeks and meet no one but bears.

"The first thing I recollect was finding myself in a big burrow covered with snow; then my mother broke the way out and led us (I had a brother) down the mountain. We soon left the snow; and I remember one day, at sunset, we stood on an overhanging rock, and my mother showed us the green valleys and nice dark forests where we could hide, and far off was the gleaming sea. Mother did not care very much for the water, I think.

"My mother was hungry, after the long winter fast, and every day took us lower and lower, until one night she led us into a sheep ranch. Then our troubles began, for she left us to catch a lamb, and never came back. We heard all about it afterward. Some ranchers had seen her, and rode out on horseback to enjoy the cruel sport of "roping a bear." As they rode around her, one threw his lariat about her neck; another caught her forefoot as she stood up, another her hind leg; and then they dragged her away to the ranch-house—and so we became orphans.

"It was not long before the dogs found us, and a man carried me home in a basket to his wife, who treated me very kindly. I did not like it, but pretended I did, and ate all I could, always watching and hoping for a chance to run away to my mountain home. My mistress, however, soon thought I was too knowing, and put a chain about my neck. Finally, when I was about four months old, they sent me to a friend in San Francisco. I shall never forget how people looked at me and laughed

when I stood on my hind legs, as if there was anything laughable in that! But they gave me sugar and other good things, and I fared well.

"My new master was a butcher, and most of the time I stayed in his shop. But some days, when I was very homesick, and longed for my mother, and the little cub who had been carried off I did not know where, the butcher's wife would take me into her room back of the shop, and then I would go to sleep, cuddled up close upon a rug, with my paws on her hand, and dream that I was back in my mountain home.

"One day I heard my master say I was to be photo-graphed, and I thought my time had come. You see, I had never heard the word before. There was no escape, as I was kept tied; and the next morning my master took me under his big coat in the cable-cars. I could just peep through one of the button-holes, and all at once I uttered a loud whine. You should have seen how the passengers stared at my master, who I knew looked embarrassed, as he gave me a tremendous squeeze. We soon got out, and I was carried up a flight of stairs, and placed on a table in a room, the walls of which were covered with pictures of people's faces, all of which seemed to keep their eyes fixed on me.

"My master petted me and gave me some sugar, and I began to think that being photographed was possibly not so bad, after all. Presently a man came in. He looked very much astonished, and said, 'Why, I thought you engaged a sitting for "a descendant of one of the early settlers"?' "

"'So I did,' replied my master; 'there it is'; pointing to where I stood up, blinking with all my might.

"'Why, it's a cub bear!' exclaimed the man.

"'Well, it is a relative of some early settlers, all the same,' my master answered.

"At this the man smiled good-humoredly,

then he went into another room, while my master petted me and gave me so much sugar that I had the toothache from it. After a while the man came back and said he was ready, and I was taken into a room where there was a big thing like a gun on three legs, with a cloth over it. My master sat down in a chair and held me in his lap while the man pointed the gun at us.

"I thought I was to be shot, and tried to get away, and this made the man so cross that he came out from under the cloth and said he could n't do it. Then my master put me up in a child's chair and propped something tight against my head, at which they both laughed so loud you could have heard them in the street, and I jumped down.

"Finally, the man tapped his forehead and said 'I have it.' He put a screen before the

gun and my master set me on top of it, holding my chain while the man crept under the cloth. I did not dare move, as I was astride of the screen, my hind feet hanging in the air. I prepared for the worst. Then the man came out again, looked at me sharply, and turned my head a little, telling me to smile; at which my master laughed. The man next shook a tambourine at me, and as I turned to see what the noise meant, I heard a *click!* and just then my master took me down and carried me home, much to my relief.

"I wondered what it was all about until one day my master took me on his knee, and, holding up a card, said, 'Well, here you are!'—and what do you suppose it was? Nothing more or less than my picture; just as I was perched astride the screen the day when I thought I was going to be killed. Here it is:"

